

Environmental Scan by ESC New England: Summary of Findings

A. Project Objectives

1. OLIS strength in supporting RI libraries.
2. OLIS weakness in supporting RI libraries.
3. Key opportunities for OLIS to lead RI libraries during next five years.

B. Methodology

1. Survey – over 130 responses
2. Focus groups – 6, various participants
3. Telephone interviews with key stakeholders
4. Review of library literature, RI library services

C. Important library services

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| 1. Lend print books and magazines | 91% |
| 2. Provide services for children/teens | 86% |
| 3. Provide study or work group spaces | 83% |
| 4. Lend e-books and e-magazines | 75% |
| 5. Provide technology training | 73% |
| 6. Provide services for adults | 69% |
| 7. Provide technology space | 67% |
| 8. Provide services for seniors | 64% |
| 9. Provide access to historical documents/artifacts | 59% |
| 10. Lend CDs, DVDs (music, videos) | 54% |

D. Most important OLIS Services

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|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Delivery Services | 73% |
| 2. Interlibrary Loan Clearinghouse | 52% |
| 3. AskRI (statewide databases) | 49% |
| 4. Children and Young Adult Services | 46% |
| 5. Summer Reading | 44% |

E. OLIS Strengths

1. Current leadership at OLIS
2. Experienced and dedicated staff – if they can help they always do
3. Resource sharing and providing educational resources
4. Building connections within the library communities

F. OLIS Weaknesses

1. Create better public presence - improve awareness of/ market library services
2. Update OLIS website, use social media to communicate to library community and residents of RI
3. OLIS is weak in building connections between school, public and academic libraries

G. Major Trends

1. Transformation of libraries into community learning centers for technology and STEM education: this aligns with the macro trend at the national level and RI Governor's priority to prepare RI skill sets to meet 21st century business needs.
2. Libraries transform as a welcoming place to everyone regardless of age or immigration status due to increase in immigrants and aging population in RI.
3. Need for print resources especially newspapers and magazines are likely to reduce. Libraries need to adapt to technology platform changes – DVD, MP3 players will be replaced by live streaming and smart devices.
4. Libraries are likely to transform into community gathering and learning places and it will impact future training needs of library staff.
5. Other key findings include the use of technology, redesign of library space, proactive advocacy, professional training, foster diversity in libraries.

H. Key Opportunities for OLIS to Lead Transformation

1. Advocate for all libraries and foster collaboration across academic, school, public and special libraries.
2. Make the OLIS website more user friendly to all, embrace social media for communication and be the voice for all libraries at the state.
3. Guide libraries to implement best practices, provide leadership, share successful ideas, programs within all libraries and explore public/private partnerships.

I. OLIS Role in Diversity in Libraries

1. Create paid summer library internships for minority high school students.
2. Actively recruit minorities to open positions, provide diversity training
3. Work with URI's library school to recruit minorities to open positions.
4. Create graduate scholarships for minority students.

J. Conclusions

1. Broaden and expand technology support to assist with digital era technology changes and privacy of information issues. There seems to be some differences between digital services that are available within urban libraries as opposed to rural communities. Opportunities to streamline this, sharing of resources and common databases would alleviate this.
2. Provide more training in business strategy planning and statistics to support librarians expanding roles. Refresher courses in procedures for circulation, cataloging and delivery, technology, programming challenges and keeping up with new issues is important.
3. The interlibrary loan program is a challenge due to delivery turnaround times, but expansion of ILL programs between various types of libraries and on an interstate basis would allow a wider availability of resource, information and services.
4. Space and the usage of that space are evolving. Space for community events, programming, performances, exhibits, small businesses, technology and study space are needed and budget should allow for these construction transitions.

5. Help is needed with public relations and advertising so that libraries can continue to reach the community. Training is needed for community outreach, advocacy.
6. Materials and training for Spanish and other non-English language speakers, including Asian languages, is important.
7. Services offered outside of the traditional library, including outreach to the community, mobile collections, wi-fi services at community events, resource sharing, scanning services and providing local history collections are needed.
8. Services requested by Talking Books Plus include lending of e-reader, e-books and read aloud materials; and being able to provide the public with project materials and materials to aid the disabled.
9. Provide more project based activities that offer opportunities for the community to convene, stay current and have access to materials they might not have available, are requested library offerings.
10. Provide community based programs so people can have human interaction, providing safe spaces, access to wider social services within the community, educational services, services for home schooled people, senior housing, disabled or homebound, and the incarcerated.
11. Cultural and demographic trends, including an aging population and increases to numbers of immigrants, present literacy/second language challenges, and issues with people being able to get to libraries. There is an increased need for services to accommodate diverse cultures. Diversity issues need to be addressed by libraries in terms of hiring and attracting staff who can serve a greater array of cultures and disabilities is seen as important.
12. Develop relationships with key organizations, government and non-government agencies for funding, grants, and services that can support all types of libraries.